



NEWS

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LOWER ARROYO GRANDE CHANNEL REPAIRED FOLLOWING FLOOD DAMAGE

TEMPLETON, Calif., March 13, 2001—Officials announced today that repairs to the lower Arroyo Grande channel have been completed, following flood damage from a March 5 storm that ripped a 150-foot hole in the levee.

"In addition to the five inches of rain that came very quickly, the floods dislodged several large trees which raced down the creek," says Margie Lindquist, District Conservationist for the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The large sycamore that jammed and diverted the creek water into the levee appears to have come from several miles up the watershed," she says. Eventually the water and trees caused scouring, erosion and levee failure, spilling onto 200 acres of prime farmland and threatening two homes and a business.

NRCS teamed with the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control District immediately following the storm to discuss methods for repairing the levee. They were able to secure \$400,000 through NRCS's Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program. As a sponsor the County is providing a 25 percent cost share match and overseeing maintenance. The project was undertaken by a local contractor.

Lindquist and her staff have visited numerous other properties since the storm. "The EWP program as authorized by Congress provides for watershed repair following natural disasters. However, it is not available to individuals, but rather to units of government, such as cities and counties. It can be used to repair levees to their former state, to protect watersheds through mulching, seeding and water diversions but it is not authorized to repair roads. However, says Lindquist, she does have information available for homeowners on topics such as sand bag placement and revegetation options.

Information on the EWP program and repair practices can be found at www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov/pa/ewp

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